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A STUDY OF THE POLICIES AND PERSPECTIVES OF TONY BLAIR'S LABOUR GOVERNMENT TOWARDS THE EUROPEAN UNION

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Introduction:

European Union (EU) is a prominent regional organization dealing with political and economic activities both at the regional and global levels. As a distinctive regional organization, it consists of 27 countries (after the exit of Britain) and has features of intergovernmental and supranational organizations. At the beginning of its formation, its scope was limited only to the coal and steel sector. Then the Treaty of Rome (25 March 1957) extended it to general economic areas European Economic Community (EEC) and atomic energy research and development through the European Atomic Energy Community (EURATOM). Later, the ambit of cooperation was expanded to many economic areas in subsequent treaties and its scope gradually extended to other areas, including foreign and security, by impacting member countries' political, economic, social, and external policy areas. The main feature of the EU is its supranational nature (although not complete) with a focus on harmonizing the member countries' policies at the Union level through cooperative endeavour.

Nonetheless, the perspectives of its member states toward the organization are not always similar. One of its prominent members, the United Kingdom's (UK) relationship with continental Europe was always difficult. Its attitude towards the European integration process differed from those of its other continental neighbours. From a continental perspective, UK had always been a part of Europe, but there was a perceptible difference in how Britain viewed continental Europe. Hence, the study of Europe through its historical perspectives is very important in explaining the creation and evolution of the EU and the UK's perspectives.

Background:

The UK is geographically separated from other continental European countries by the English Channel and North Sea and it was never under any colonial rule. Instead, it colonised many non-European countries and ruled over them for many centuries. Also, it did not experience humiliation or defeat by any country, unlike its European counterparts. Even during the Second World War, the UK was less damaged because of its geographical location compared to other European Countries and its pride in nationalism remained intact. So, UK always considered itself a global power equal to the United States of America (USA) and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). In European politics, it always assumed the role of a balancer in the Balance of power relations. This trend of being a balancer continued for a long time, and this long-term deeper involvement in the European continent's affairs was considered a threat to the UK's

sovereignty. Hence, the UK's response was sceptical and negative when the proposal for a European institutionalized framework of European integration through the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) came up in the 1950s.

From UK's point of view, any permanent involvement in the deeper European institutionalized framework posed a danger to its freedom of action. This was mainly related to the UK's involvement in the institutionalised framework of European integration after 1945. This was so because, First, the UK considered that any institutionalised involvement in the EU would affect its Sovereignty. Second, the UK always considered itself as a global power equal to the USA and USSR and it considered France and Germany to be regional powers. In addition to this, in the backdrop of the proposal for ECSC, the UK considered its relationship with the British Commonwealth important. Basically, the British Commonwealth of Nations is a free association of sovereign states and a political association of 54 countries. Most of these countries were earlier colonies and historically connected to the British Empire. The Balfour Declaration of 1926, Statute of Westminster of 1931 and London Declaration of 1949 played a major role in its formation. Its charter includes the shared values of democracy, human rights, social development, and the rule of law. From the beginning, the UK maintained a cooperative relationship with the Commonwealth of Nations. Initially, in Europe, France, Germany, Belgium, Italy, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands had planned to build a separate union of European countries. The newly independent African and Asian countries joined to British Commonwealth of Nations. During this period, Britain’s trade with Commonwealth countries was nearly four times larger than its trade with European countries.

Similarly, the special relationship with the USA was considered more important to the UK’s interests than its involvement in Europe and its integration process. The UK had maintained a very special and unique relationship with the U.S.A. The special relationship denotes very close relations between the U.K. and the U.S.A. on political, diplomatic, cultural, economic, military, and historical relations. These relations developed especially after 1940. These two countries together shared a common history, language, and legal system. This binds them together for many years. The term ‘Special relationship’ developed between these two countries mainly during the World War II period. Both countries’ foreign policies also depict the important bilateral relationship between these two countries. Both countries developed cooperation in the fields of trade, commerce, finance, and technology. At the same time, it perceived that for security, NATO’s defence system was far superior to any other defence system in the world.

On the other hand, the UK tried to maintain its role as a world power through its connection with the British Commonwealth and its special relationship with the USA. So, it can be said that even after the two World Wars that had impacted its economy badly, the UK attached significance to its global foreign policy approach rather than getting entangled in any regional integration framework. However, the Six (France, Germany, Belgium, Italy, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg) European countries went ahead despite the UK's absence and formed the ECSC.

So, after the establishment of the ECSC, when six countries wanted to create European Communities (EC) with France as its leader at the Messina conference (1955), they invited the UK to participate in the meetings of a committee, headed by Paul-Henri Spaak (Belgium Foreign Minister) that was assigned with the responsibility of preparing a blueprint for the future of Europe. But the UK displayed its cool attitude by sending a junior member from the Board of Trade to attend the committee meetings as its representative and even this member was later withdrawn when it became clear to the UK that Europe was moving towards supranationalism and this was done as UK wanted to form a Free Trade Area (FTA) to maintain its freedom of action in trade matters. However, the Spaak Committee was moving in the direction of forming a Customs Union. Further, the UK had not taken well to the idea of West Germany and France joining together to form the EC. Britain thought this would weaken its position as a balancer at the European level. However, other countries went ahead with the main objective of giving priority to adjusting their country's national interests within the framework of supranational structure through regional negotiations and formed EEC and Euratom in 1957 besides the existing ECSC. These three communities (ECSC, Euratom and EEC) merged and a single council and commission were formed for the EC by the Merger Treaty on 8 April 1965 (which came into force on 1 July 1967).

Nevertheless, the UK moved close to Europe in the changed context of the late 1950s and early 1960s when it became evident that it could no longer afford to maintain the status of world power. The decline of the former British empire status and the domestic economic troubles of the 1960s made the UK turn towards Europe. This shift was due to several reasons. Firstly, the UK's relationship with the USA was also becoming problematic, as evident in US President Kennedy's decision not to consult the UK in global foreign policy matters, best represented in the Cuban missile crisis. Secondly, the Second World War, and then the decline of the British Empire and the economic problems of the 1960s made the UK more interested in EC as a way out. During this period, the UK witnessed a serious economic crisis and devaluation of its currency. UK's economic development in comparison to other EC member countries was very

low and was following a declining trend. Hence it decided to join the EC's Common Market and get some economic concessions for its economic development.

So, Britain, for the first time in 1961, and for the second time in 1967, applied for EEC membership. But both times, French President Charles de Gaulle declined Britain's membership claim to the EEC as he feared that British entry could affect the French position in Europe and Britain could enter the EC only after his exit from the post of President. The third time, Britain pushed their application through the Western European Union (WEU), a collective security organization that came into being after World War II in which the existing members of the European Communities (EC) were members. What needs to be stressed here is that 'the UK wanted to get the EEC membership mainly to be a part of an economically successful club and not out of any liking for supranational EC construction.'

Later, detailed debates and discussions took place on this issue in the House of Commons from 21 to 28 October 1971 and in this discussion, the Labour Party vehemently opposed Britain's entry into EC mainly over country's 'Sovereignty' question and EC's supranational structure. But when the votes of the entire House of Commons members were considered, out of 356 members, 244 members supported the UK's entry into EC under Edward Heath. Later, a Treaty of Accession was signed on 22 January 1972. A bill on the UK's EC membership got the Queen's assent on 17 October 1972. Officially, the UK along with Denmark and Ireland joined the EC on 1 January 1973.

However, even after the UK's membership in the EC in 1973, it was not completely involved in the EC policy initiatives and the implementation process and did not maintain any healthy relationships with other EC member countries. This pattern is visible from 1974 to 1997 under four Prime Ministers namely, Harold Wilson, James Callaghan, Margaret Thatcher, and John Major. The study of all these four British prime ministers' European policies is important to understand how Tony Blair's Labour government's European policies are different from earlier UK Prime Ministers.

Britain and the EC/EU since membership:

After Edward Heath's rule, the Labour Party leader, Harold Wilson (1964) became the Prime Minister of the UK. His government's European policies mainly concentrated on the Common Agriculture Policy (CAP), EC regional policies, the British Budget question (BBQ), the Value Added Tax system (VAT), and the Sovereignty issue. As per the party's election manifesto, the Wilson government held a referendum for the continuation of the UK's

membership in the EC; but, his efforts to control the UK's net contribution to the European Community's budget failed to get the desired results.

After Harold Wilson's rule, the LP leader James Callaghan became the Prime Minister of the UK. His government followed more restrictive and rigid European policies than previous UK Prime Ministers. He openly expressed his strong opposition to 'giving more powers to the European Parliament and was against surrendering the Country's sovereignty to any supranational institutions like the European Parliament.' During his term, the anti-European movements started growing at a rapid rate and Callaghan's government opposed the UK's membership in the Exchange Rate Mechanism (ERM) because as Britain considered it a step toward building a Federal Europe.

After James Callaghan's rule, the Conservative Party leader Margaret Thatcher became the Prime Minister of the UK Thatcher's government followed a more aggressive policy towards the EC. Nonetheless, in comparison to the previous Labour government's European policy, it can be said that Thatcher's government followed a more pragmatic policy than previous governments. This means, she was consistent in her opposition to the supranational construction of Europe and its negative impact on the UK's sovereignty yet she signed the Single European Act (SEA) and joined ERM. At the same time, she raised concern over the UK's payment to the EU as disproportionate to what it gets back from the EU, at the Fontainebleau European Council meeting (1984). In this meeting, 66 per cent of the BBQ rebate was refunded.

After Margaret Thatcher's rule, the Conservative Party leader John Major became the Prime Minister of the UK. His main idea was to place UK at the core of the EC because he wanted to maintain a good friendly relationship with EC member countries, especially France and Germany to maintain peace in the region. Most of his cabinet members had shown a sceptical approach towards the UK's relationship with EC, especially on the Single Currency, Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and Social Policy. Nonetheless, he followed a more constructive and positive attitude towards the European integration process. However, the Eurosceptic group of his cabinet played an active role in an argument to hold a referendum for the UK's entry into EMU and subsequently, the UK backed out of the EMU pillar of the Maastricht Treaty (1993) on the European Union.

Overall, the UK's sceptical or negative attitude towards the EU continued under all these UK Prime Ministers starting from Harold Wilson to John Major. And it can be inferred that

during all these prime ministers' periods, the UK was unhappy with how the EU was functioning and it stood as an internal staunch critic of the EU.

The Labour government's policy under Tony Blair's premiership became significant in this uneasy relationship. Tony Blair was the UK's prime minister for three terms (1997-2001, 2001-2005 and 2005-2007) and was strongly in favour of the UK's alignment with the EU. This was quite in contrast to many of his predecessors such as Margaret Thatcher. The study of the policies and perspectives of Tony Blair's Labour government towards the EU plays a prominent role in the understanding of UK-EU relations.

In 1997 in the general election manifesto, Tony Blair's Labour Party made two pledges the first was to hold a plebiscite on the participation in the single currency – The Euro; and, the second was to initiate the EU reform process. And when the Labour government under Tony Blair won the elections, it followed a more positive European policy and concentrated mainly on EU reforms in modern lines.

Blair's first tenure of premiership gave importance to issues related to the Single Market, EU enlargement, CAP reforms and Veto matters. The major policy initiative regarding the policy on Euro currency came on 27 October 1997 by the Chancellor of Exchequer (COE), Gordon Brown. In this policy announcement, there were mainly three policy objectives; first, a single currency within a single European market (SEM) would benefit Europe and the UK, second, about joining the Euro currency, there were no constitutional grounds for not joining, third, the decision to join the Euro currency depends on the results of five economic tests - Sustainable convergence between the UK and the Euro currency, flexibility about economic change, its effect on investment, its impact on the financial services industry and its effect on employment.

During the New Labour government's 1998 EU presidency, the New Labour government had the opportunity to preside over EU ministerial meetings and summit meetings and it also became the EU's representative on external relations. All these along with pre-planned programs, conferences, and meetings under EU jurisdiction provided an opportunity for Britain to showcase its prominence in the EU.

When Tony Blair took over the EU presidency in 1998, his government announced its policy objectives. This included launching the single currency, the EU enlargement process, policy reforms of the EU, and policy reforms on employability and competitiveness, with a focus

on establishing the UK as an influential and constructive partner in the EU. In this regard, Tony Blair's New Labour government followed a more constructive European policy under the EU presidency and pursued a positive and more practical approach toward EU policies and programs during the EU presidency. Yet the New Labour government failed to acquire a centre stage for the UK in framing EU policy decisions.

The Labour Party in its 2001 UK General Election manifesto made a promise of '25 steps to a Better Britain' which greatly influenced the 2001 UK General Election. Among them, the major policy objective was 'Long-term Economic stability and 'to lead economic reform in Europe.'

After winning the Second Term of office (2001), the Blair government made some alterations in the cabinet to develop a constructive goal-oriented EU policy strategy. Jack Straw was appointed as the new Foreign Secretary in place of Robin Cook and Peter Hain was made a minister for Europe to assist Jack Straw on European policy matters.

However, during the second term, Blair's government was more fractious with other EU member countries over the Iraq invasion (2003) and thus UK was totally isolated from other EU member countries.

During the third term of the New Labour Party's rule (2005), it stressed four important issues- first, to give approval to the EU constitutional treaty through a referendum, second, promoting economic reforms in the EU countries, third, enhancing leadership in the European defence cooperation program and fourth, continuing a sound policy on the Euro currency.

During the 2005 EU presidency, it brought a manifesto regarding the UK's objectives in its EU policies. The objectives are as follows: to get the approval for the Constitutional treaty through a referendum, to promote social and economic reforms in Europe, to give leadership to the European defence cooperation, to make a common-sense policy on the Euro currency, and an agreement on EU financial perspectives, sugar market reforms, a continuation of the enlargement process and to take the initiative to improve and develop EU's role in world affairs.

In comparison to the 1998 UK-EU presidency, the 2005 EU presidency was less successful in implementing the UK-EU policy objectives. With Turkey and Croatia's accession to the EU and sugar market reforms, the Labour government achieved some success. Regarding financial perspectives for the period 2007-13, an agreement was made with Germany under its Chancellor, Angela Merkel., to allow the UK government to reduce its budgetary contribution towards the EU.

A closer examination of Tony Blair's European policy suggests that there has been a reasonable achievement in implementing the New Labour government's manifesto promises in

its European policy during its first term of office compared to the later period. However, the real weakness of the NL government was building a domestic consensus on its European policies and its failure to explain the reality to the general public in a better manner. Ultimately Blair's New Labour government was unable to garner people's support for his government's European policy. Although Tony Blair's constructive engagement with the EU did not alter the people's perception of the EU, the UK under Tony Blair became an important and considerate partner to other EU countries.

Statement of a problem:

UK's relationship with the EU is rather ambivalent and defies exact characterisation. UK was involved in the EU but generally opposed any 'transfer of sovereignty' to EU institutions with its faith in the system of nation-states. It attempted to shape the EU policy according to its perception but when failed, it tried to catch up with the EU partners who went ahead with their policies. This general perception was sought to be changed during Tony Blair's tenure. Blair supported the EU, quite impressively compared to his predecessors, but was not able to take the people along. The UK aligned with the EU but not totally like others as exemplified by the non-participation of the UK in the Euro and some of the social policy areas. The UK under Tony Blair was generally regarded as going closer to the EU but at the same time was considered deviant in crucial areas of the Euro or foreign policy, especially on the Gulf crisis.

In other words, the relationship of the UK with the EU is quite ambivalent and Tony Blair gave a new dimension to it by neither being pro-European nor anti-European. He reset the relationship with the EU and took the UK closer to the EU. This act in the background of the general attitude of the UK towards the EU became important. The question here is whether it was a political necessity enabled by the convictions of the time or a new approach of the UK towards the EU. This calls for closer scrutiny of Tony Blair's policy toward the EU and the thesis has attempted to understand the causes, nature, and implications of Tony Blair's move toward the EU.

Objectives of the study:

In the light of the above, the proposed research aims -

- To perceive the reason behind the UK's involvement in the EU.
- To analyse to what extent the UK's position is different from the other EU member countries in EU policies.
- To understand the reasons and motives of the UK while participating in EU projects.
- Internal debate in the EU regarding the UK's role in the EU and vice–versa.

- Impact of Tony Blair's policy on the EU and its wider ramifications.

Literature Review:

The review of literature is an important step of research as it provides the researcher with an overview of what has been done and what is being done; besides providing a nuanced understanding of the subject matter. There exist several studies that serve as reference material and facilitate a better understanding of the subject matter. This includes,

Martin J. Dedman's book titled *The Origins and Development of European Union 1945-1995: A History of European Integration* (Routledge, London, 1996) provides a concise and up-to-date introduction to the formation of the EU, the European political system of the second half of the twentieth century, the general history of the European unity and integration from 1945-1995. It also provides knowledge of the three schools of thought regarding the causes of European integration and the economic and political reasons for establishing supranational organizations and other organizations created after 1945. However, it failed to provide comprehensive knowledge about the formation of the EU and European unification. So, there is a need to study all these aspects from a broader perspective.

Henry L. Mason's book titled *The European Coal and Steel Community: Experiment in Supranationalism* (Springer, Netherlands, 1955) provides knowledge about the 'supranational' organization, the new type of structure. The author argues that it is standing midway between international and federal organs. And it also provides knowledge about the pilot experiment conducted in the supranational organization, David Mitrany's functional approach in the formation of the European Coal and Steel Community. However, it lacks a comprehensive study of the term Supranationalism. So, there is a need to study the contributions of the European Coal and Steel Community to the formation of the European Union, comprehensively.

Neill Nugent's book titled *Government and Politics of the European Union* (Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2003) provides an understanding of the EU's historical evolution, the West European integration process, and the formation of the European Coal and Steel Community, the European Atomic Energy Community, and the European Economic Community. It is also useful to understand the four treaties that are central to the European integration process and the role and influence of the institutions involved in developing the EU, the policy-making, the EU budgetary process, and its external relations. However, it lacks in providing complete knowledge about the conceptual and theoretical tools of the integration process, the policy outcomes, the organizational characteristics of the EU, EU enlargement, and the EU's future developments and challenges. So, there is a need for a comprehensive study of

European institutions and politics, the community's organizational structure, the complexity of the EC system, and different approaches toward the integration processes, structures, and policy outcomes.

Christian Schwinger's book titled *Britain, Germany, and the Future of the European Union* (Palgrave MacMillan, New York, 2007) provides an understanding of the EU enlargement process, the role of France and Germany's alliance, the strategic level of policy-making and working partnerships between the larger EU member countries namely France, Germany, and the UK. It also provides knowledge about the UK-Germany's approach in major policy areas during the late 1990s. However, it failed to provide detailed knowledge about France and Germany's alliance in the EU policy-making process and the UK's approach in major EU policy areas. So, there is a need for a detailed study of UK-Germany-France relations in major EU policy areas, issues, and the future development of the EU.

Alistair Jones's book titled *Britain and the European Union*, (Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 2007) provides an understanding of the UK's relationship with the EU, the impact of EU membership on the UK, the role of the media, political parties, pressure groups, and social media on EU-UK relations. It is also useful to understand the EU's history, its institutions, and its policies as well as understand the British applications for EU membership and the referendum of 1975. It is also a convenient tool to understand the debate on intergovernmental versus supranationalism. However, it is unable to provide detailed knowledge about the United Kingdom and European Union's relations from a historical perspective. It provides only a narrow understanding of the EU-UK relationship in a changed scenario. So, there is a need to study UK-EU relations comprehensively.

Helen Parr's book titled *Britain's Policy Towards the European Community: Harold Wilson and Britain's World Role, 1964-1967*(Routledge, London, 2005) provides a fresh understanding of British Prime Minister Harold Wilson's policies toward the European Community, post-war British history, and Britain's historical relationship with Europe. It also highlights Britain's European policies between 1964 to 1967, French President Charles de Gaulle's veto towards Britain's membership in the European Community for the second time. It analyses the rationale behind Britain's policy approach towards the European Community when France strongly objected to Britain's membership in the European Community. It also discusses Britain's diplomacy towards the Six European Community member countries and its policy towards Europe within the context of its foreign policy transition from a global to a regional role. However, it fails to provide a detailed study of Britain's policies toward the European

Community during Harold Wilson's period. So, there is a need to study Britain's European policies from 1964 to 1967 to better understand EU-UK relations during Harold Wilson's period.

David Gowland, Arthur Turner, and Alex Wright's book titled *Britain and Europe Integration since 1945*(Routledge, London, 2010) provides an understanding of Britain's relations with the European Union since 1945 and illustrates the changing and multifaceted nature of British and European politics. It is also useful to understand Britain's approach to the process of European integration during various British prime ministers. And, provides an understanding of phase-by-phase Britain's different aspects in becoming a member of the EU. It is also useful to understand the travel from non-acceptance of membership by Britain to joining the EU. It is also useful to understand the chronological events of the British administration and its perspective on becoming a member of the EU. It is also useful to understand Tony Blair's pro-European policies between 1997 and 2007. But it fails to critically analyze Britain's membership in the European Union and Tony Blair's pro-European policies.

Kevin Theakston's book titled *After No 10–Former Prime Ministers in British Politics* (Palgrave Macmillan, London, 2010) provides an understanding of the UK prime ministers starting from Sir Robert Walpole to Gordon Brown and gives detailed information about British history and contemporary politics and analyses the experience of former British prime ministers after leaving the topmost office in the British government. But it fails to provide former British prime ministers' European policies with a better understanding of EU-UK relations. So, there is a need to study all these aspects from a broader perspective.

John Blundell's book titled *Margaret Thatcher: A Portrait of the Iron Lady* (Algora Publishing, New York, 2008) understands the chronological events of Thatcher's political life, premiership, EU policy reforms, political perspectives, and her decisive style in handling potentially explosive issues. It is also useful to understand Margaret Thatcher's premiership from 1979 to 1990 and Thatcher's leadership of the Conservative Party from 1975 to 1990. However, it fails to provide Thatcher's European policies and budgetary issues from a broader perspective. So, there is a need to study all these aspects comprehensively.

Claire Berlinski's book titled *There is No Alternative*: *Why Margaret Thatcher Matters* (Basic Books, New York, 2008) provides an understanding of the rise and success of Margaret Thatcher's leadership as well as her role in the transformation of Britain into a modern wealthy and influential nation. And, is useful to understand the deconstruction of the post-war socialistic policies of Europe and the rise of the global free market revolution and useful to understand her

action against anarchism, communism, socialism, and liberalism. It also critically analyses Thatcher's monetary policies, social issues, and their impact on British society and analyses both the positive and negative aspects of her rule. However, it fails to provide a more detailed understanding of Margaret Thatcher's European policies, the British budgetary question, and her policies on the European Monetary Union. So, there is a need to study all these aspects from a broader perspective.

Stephen Wall's book titled *A Stranger in Europe: Britain and the EU from Thatcher to Blair* (Oxford University Press, New York, 2008) provides an understanding of the relationship between the EU and Britain beginning from 1982 to 2004 negotiation of the EU Constitutional Treaty. It critically analyses Britain's European policies under Margaret Thatcher, John Major, and Tony Blair. It also analyses the reconciliation of Britain's national and European interests and Britain's success and failure in the European policy issues. It also discusses Britain's role as an Awkward Partner in European affairs and different British Prime ministers' roles in shaping and reforming modern Europe. However, it fails to provide a more detailed explanation of Britain's EU policies from 1982 to 2004.

Jon Lawrence's book, *Electing Our Masters: The Hastings in British Politics from Hogarth to Blair* (Oxford University Press, New York, 2009), provides the changing relations between British politicians and the general public in the eighteenth century. It critically analyses bruising public rituals intended to bestow legitimacy on politicians. It also critically analyses the eighteenth-century political uncertainties despite the emergence of modern means of communication systems. It also discusses Tony Blair's 2005 election campaigns. But it fails to discuss Tony Blair's 1997 and 2001 election campaigns. So, there is a need to study all these aspects comprehensively.

Bonnie Hinman's book titled *Modern World Leaders: Tony Blair* (Chelsea House Publishers, New York, 2007) gives an understanding of Tony Blair's role as a Labour Party leader, parliament member, Prime Minister for three terms, Negotiator, and World Leader. It also provides an understanding of Blair's idea of modernization and change, Blair's major peace agreement in Northern Ireland during his first term, Blair's support to US President George W. Bush after the September 11, 2001 attacks during his second term, and London bombings during his third term. However, it fails to provide a detailed understanding of his European policies during his three terms.

Peter Lee's book titled *Blair's Just War: Iraq and the Illusion of Morality* (Palgrave Macmillan, London, 2012) provides an understanding of Tony Blair's political leadership and

his role in the 2003 invasion of Iraq. However, it fails to provide a detailed understanding of Tony Blair's European policies, the UK's relationship with the USA, and the consequences of Blair's 2003 Iraq invasion on EU-UK relations.

Stephen Benedict Dyson's book titled *The Blair Identity: Leadership and Foreign Policy* (Manchester University Press, New York, 2009) provides an understanding of Tony Blair's second tenure of the premiership, his government's European policies, the 2003 Iraq invasion, and its impact on Britain's foreign policy. It also provides an understanding of Blair's role in Kosovo, Sierra Leone, Afghanistan, and the Iraq crisis. It also critically analyses Blair's influence on British foreign policy and international politics during his three terms. However, it fails to provide a detailed outlook on Tony Blair's European policies and the three tenures of his rule.

Research gap:

A survey of the existing literature on the subject reveals that they are useful and provide an understanding of the theme. But they also do not comprehensively cover the reasons and motives behind the UK's involvement in EU politics under various administrations. Available literature also does not sufficiently examine the key drivers behind the UK's participation in EU projects. A survey of the literature also reveals that there is a need to study the UK's role, especially under Tony Blair, as they also do not comprehensively cover Tony Blair's EU policies.

Hypothesis:

The research proceeds with the following hypothesis:

1) The UK's participation in the EU is guided by its Economic interest and not out of any larger or ideal objectives.
2) Tony Blair's government failed to evoke public support for his policies toward the EU.
3) Tony Blair's policy perspective has had an imprint on the UK's policy towards the EU and has made it difficult for successors to deviate from it.

Conceptual Framework:

The proposed research is focused on the UK in the EU and its larger implications in the background of the EU's implementation of policies in different contexts. However, the stress is given to the understanding of factors promoting the evolution of the UK's role in the EU in general and regarding the position of other countries. The study emphasizes the policy and perspectives of the UK during Tony Blair's premiership and aims to comprehend UK foreign policy only in the context of the EU and does not deal exclusively with its foreign policy. Developments that took place after Tony Blair's period in the UK's role in the EU are not covered in this study.

Scope of the Study:

Given the limited time frame of PhD research, the scope of the proposed research is limited to certain areas only:

- The study depicts UK foreign policy only in the context of the EU and does not deal with other aspects of its foreign policy.
- The study focused on the policy and perspectives of the UK during Tony Blair's premiership and is not inclusive of other policies of Tony Blair.
- The developments that took place after Tony Blair's period in the UK's role in the EU are not covered in this study.

Research Methodology:

- This work on 'A Study of the Policies and Perspectives of Tony Blair's Labour Government towards European Union' is an analytical work and the proposed study largely relies on primary sources including official and government documents, publications, and reports of various International and European Agencies. The study has also analysed the opinions, statements of the statesmen and party documents.
- This study critically examined the secondary sources such as books, journals, and articles, available on the subject matter. So, the researcher collected the sources by visiting several libraries such as
    - Mangalore University Library, Konaje, Mangalore
    - Manipal University Library of Centre for European Studies, Manipal
    - Hyderabad Central University Library, Hyderabad
    - University of Hyderabad, Hyderabad
    - Osmania University Library, Hyderabad
    - Maulana Azad National Urdu University Library, Hyderabad
    - Gujarat University Library, Ahmedabad, Gujarat
    - Kannur University Library, Kannur
    - Jawaharlal Nehru University Library, New Delhi
    - Bangalore University Library, Bengaluru
    - Karnataka Central Library, Bengaluru
- Discussions with the specialists were made to make the proposed study more relevant.
    - Prof. Rajendra K. Jain, Jawaharlal Nehru University New Delhi
    - Prof. Uman Salma Bava, Jawaharlal Nehru University New Delhi

- Prof. Gulshan Sachdeva, Jawaharlal Nehru University New Delhi
- Mr Michael Hindley, Former Member of the European Parliament (MEP) (4 February 2019 in India)
- Prof. Emeritus. Hartmut Elsenhans, Leipzig University, Germany (Discussed in India)

Chapterisation:

This research has five chapters.

Chapter 1 - The European Community's Formation and United Kingdom's Response

This chapter aims to provide an overview of the background of the integration process in Europe from a historical perspective. It discusses the UK's position on regional integration and addresses the evolution of the idea of European unity, the formation of the EC, and the UK's response in the different stages of the EC's formation. The circumstances that led to the UK's membership (1973) in the EC are also delineated in this chapter.

Chapter 2 - The United Kingdom and European Union: Membership to Engagement (1974-1997)

This chapter depicts the UK's position after joining till the end of John Major's government in 1997 and addresses the major European policies and perspectives under UK Prime Ministers namely, Harold Wilson, James Callaghan, Margaret Thatcher, and John Major's period. An analysis of the UK's sceptical or negative attitude towards the EU under all these UK Prime Ministers starting from Harold Wilson to John Major's rule is done here.

Chapter 3 -The United Kingdom's Perspectives towards the European Union during Tony Blair's Period (1997-2007)

This chapter explains Tony Blair's three governments' (1997-2001, 2001-2005, and 2005-2007) policies and perspectives toward the EU. An extensive explanation of Tony Blair's European policies in the social chapter, Economic reforms, Foreign and Defence policies, Justice and Home Affairs policies, British Budgetary policies, the Common Agriculture Policy, and the European Monetary Union is given in this chapter. A comparative Study of Tony Blair's three governments, 1998 UK's EU presidency, 2005 UK's EU presidency is done and the domestic public support in the implementation of Tony Blair's government's European policy is analysed in depth.

Chapter 4 - Tony Blair's Government and European Union: Policy, Trend, and Impact

This chapter assesses the overall success and limitations of Tony Blair's Labour government's policies toward the EU and compares Tony Blair's New Labour government v/s the Previous Conservative government's European policies on the European Monetary Union, Euro currency, Veto system, Enlargement of the EU, EU Directives, and EU Constitution. A scrutiny of Britain, USA, and NATO's relations with one another after the September 11, 2001, World Trade Centre attacks is carried out. The impact of the Afghanistan invasion and the Iraq war on Britain's European policies during Tony Blair's period is also discussed in this chapter.

Chapter 5 - Conclusion

This chapter gives an overview of the findings of the earlier chapters. It closely examines Tony Blair's European policies and his achievements in implementing the UK's role in the EU. It also highlights his inability to reach a domestic consensus on European policies.

Major findings of the thesis:

This research thesis entitled "**A Study of the Policies and Perspectives of Tony Blair's Labour Government Towards European Union**" had three hypotheses that testify distinct scenarios after research.

First, **the UK's participation in the EU is guided by its economic interest and not out of any larger or ideal objectives**. As already discussed in the chapters of this thesis, the UK is geographically separated from other European countries and was never under colonial rule and it was always considered that any long-term deeper involvement in the affairs of the European continent was a danger to the UK's sovereignty. It had also prioritised its relation with the US and Commonwealth above entanglement in European politics after second world war. It was only the domestic economic troubles of the 1960s made the UK turn towards Europe. It wanted to join the EC's Common Market and get some economic concessions for its economic development. Even after its membership in the EC, the UK had maintained an uneasy relationship with the EU, and the UK's sceptical or negative attitude towards the EU continued under all the British Prime Ministers starting from Harold Wilson to John Major and the UK was unhappy with how the EU was moving and stood as an internal critic of the EU. This shows that the UK joined the EU for Economic reasons to get out of the 1960's global economic crisis and

not for any specific interest. By this, it can be said that the first hypothesis is justified in this research.

Second, **Tony Blair's government failed to evoke public support for his policies toward the EU**. As already discussed in the chapters, Tony Blair was strongly in favour of the UK's alignment with the EU, and there has been some success in implementing the government's strategy promises in its European policies especially during its first term of office. But the real weakness of the Labour government was building a domestic consensus on its European policies. The government made various efforts to get public support for his government's ambitious European policies but it failed to change public opinion towards its European policies mainly due to its support for the US-led attack on Iraq and its consequences as well as failure in explaining the reality to the public in a good manner. This shows that Tony Blair's Labour government made various efforts to get domestic public support for his government's European policy objectives into practice. It had some success during its first term but not so much in the second and third terms of its rule. This was so because, during its second term, the international circumstances also not favoured the Labour government's European policies, mainly Tony Blair's support to George W. Bush's key foreign policy aspects. This led to division within EU member countries. But these divisions were mainly derived in response to the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks in the USA. These divisions widened over Bush's interpretation of United Nations resolutions to take military action on Saddam Hussein's regime. The Iraq War (2003) in particular, greatly affected Tony Blair's European policies and failed to get public support for his government's European policies. By this, it can be said that the second hypothesis is justified in this research.

Third, **Tony Blair's policy perspective has had an imprint on the UK's policy towards the EU and has made it difficult for successors to deviate from it**. As already discussed in the chapters of this thesis, Tony Blair's Labour government changed the UK's perception towards the EU. But because of the Iraq war and its consequences on UK-EU relations, Tony Blair's Labour government failed to get public support for his ambitious European policies. However, during its first term, Blair's government gained some success in terms of EU policy initiatives and their implementation. But, during his second and third tenures, especially after the 2003 Iraq war, Tony Blair's fame weakened at the domestic and international levels and not much progress took place on EU policy initiatives and developments during these terms. The Labour government failed to make a unanimous choice on European policy programs, notwithstanding the fact that the Labour government developed more positive European policy initiatives than

previous all UK governments. Later Gordon Brown's government also continued Blair's constructive European policy agenda. This shows Tony Blair's policies and perspectives towards the European Union did impact UK-EU relations. But it is difficult to accept the notion that Tony Blair's policies made it difficult for the later governments to deviate from UK-EU policy matters. Later governments made their own choices that were not in tune with Blair's perspectives which is best expressed in the Brexit. So, the hypothesis does not appear to fit into the reality.

Overall, closer scrutiny of Tony Blair's European policy suggests that there has been a sensible success in implementing the Labour government's manifesto promises in its European policy and the UK under Tony Blair turned out to be a significant and considerate partner of other EU countries. The real weakness of the Labour government was building a domestic acceptance of its European policies. The Blair government failed to transform the sceptical domestic public view toward the European unification process and failed to describe the reality to the public in a convincing manner. In other words, it can be said that Blair's administration has carried a more constructive European policy on a weak domestic foundation and the foundation could not be strengthened as per his wishes despite his best efforts.

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